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Russian Interest Shown in Mt. Alto As Chancery Site

The Soviet government in Moscow has indicated a definite interest in acquiring the site of the abandoned Mt. Alto Veterans Hospital here as a new chancery.

Russian officials last week asked the American Embassy what United States needs are for a new chancery in Moscow, a State Department spokesman said today.

An American offer for the Russians to use Mt. Alto would hinge on the Soviet Union's providing an equally attractive site for a chancery in Moscow.

American embassy officials told the Russians they need about 13 to 15 acres in Moscow. The Kremlin is expected to make a definite property offer within the next 10 days, the spokesman said.

The Russians have been chancery shopping in Washington for several years because their present headquarters at 16th and L streets NW is overcrowded. The State Department has the same problem in Moscow.

The Soviet practice is to lease, not sell, chancery property in their capital and it is expected the State Department would handle Mt. Alto, located on Wisconsin Avenue NW, just above S. Georgetown, the same way.

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